DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 237 906 CG 017 163

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TITLE Exploring the Content and Structure of Cross-Cultural Attitudes.
PUB DATE Aug 83
NOTE 22p.; Paper presented at the Annual Convention of the American Psychological Association (91st, Anaheim, CA, August 26-30, 1983). Best copy available.
PUB TYPE Reports - Research/Technical (143) -- Speeches/Conference Papers (150) -- Tests/Evaluation Instruments (160)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS Attitude Change; *Attitude Measures; College Students; *Counselor Attitudes; Counselor Training; *Cultural Awareness; Cultural Differences; Higher Education; Perspective Taking; Schemata (Cognition); Social Attitudes; Social Cognition
IDENTIFIERS Cross Cultural Counseling; *Cultural Attitudes Repertory Technique

ABSTRACT

Efforts to enhance the effectiveness of cross-cultural interventions have emphasized the need for counselors to assess their own as well as their client's cultural value systems. To assess cultural world views, the Cultural Attitudes Repertory Technique (CART), which examines the content and structure of an individual's personal system of cultural constructs, was developed. In the CART instrument, twelve cultural groups are categorized by an Alike/Different dichotomy and then the constructs are rated on a seven-point Likert-type scale ranging from family-oriented to independent. The result is a matrix of 144 ratings (12 constructs by 12 elements), reflecting an individual's perceptions of various cultural groups from the individual's unique world view. The instrument was administered to a female college student both before and after a course in counseling ethnic minorities. The CART was able to document that, following training, the student's awareness of cultural differences increased, although her system remained poorly integrated. The case study was beneficial in establishing the CART as a flexible tool that could be used in examining cultural world views. The CART can be used as a self-exploratory exercise in a variety of settings, particularly in counselor training. Ratings on the CART can be plotted over time to graphically illustrate attitude changes. Further empirical research is needed to document its usefulness. (BL)

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Exploring the Content and Structure of Cross-Cultural Attitudes

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Running Head: Cross-Cultural Attitudes

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Abstract

This paper describes an instrument designed to assess the content and structure of cultural attitudes. Derived from Kelly's (1955) Role Construct Repertory Test, the instrument enables an inspection of the personal meaning and organizational properties of the individual's cultural value system. Methods of administration are described and analyses are illustrated with a case example of one counseling student before and after an introductory course in cross-cultural counseling. Applications of the instrument to issues in research, counseling, and cross-cultural training are also discussed.

Exploring the Content and Structure of Cross-Cultural Attitudes

It is widely recognized that individuals differ in the cultural attitudes (Sundberg, 1981), values (Sue & Sue, 1977), and beliefs (Schwebel, 1980) which comprise their unique "world views" (Sue, 1977). An appreciation of these differences helps the counselor move from an ethnocentric to a more pluralistic perspective (Hoppes, 1979), thereby enabling him or her to adopt more easily the client's perspective. If the counselor is not sensitive to the clients' differing viewpoints, these differences may serve as impediments to effective counseling (Sue, 1981; Sue & Sue, 1977). As a result, efforts to enhance the effectiveness of cross-cultural interventions have emphasized the need for counselors to assess their own, as well as their clients', cultural value systems (Green, 1982; Sue, et. al, 1982).

This paper describes a technique for assessing cultural world views. The method derives from Kelly's (1955) personal construct theory. The usefulness of construct theory for understanding intercultural differences (Diamond, 1982) and relationships (McCoy, 1980) only recently has begun to receive attention. Construct theory characterizes individuals as "personal scientists" who develop implicit theories in an effort to understand and predict their experience. Each personal theory, or world view, is unique and is composed of many personal constructs. A personal construct is a conceptual dimension which is used to order and interpret experience. It is the way in which some things are seen as alike and different from others (Bannister & Mair, 1968). For example, a counselor may experience her Asian-American clients as "more oriented toward their families" in contrast to her Anglo clients who she views as "more independent of their families." This dimension (oriented toward family vs. independent

of family) represents a personal construct along which she may order or "construe" a variety of other cultural or racial groups as well. These personal constructs are components of the person's subjective world view in that, regardless of their objective validity, they serve to channelize and systematize perceptions (Kelly, 1955, pp. 46-50). Together with many other constructs, such dimensions form a construct system. This network of personal understandings constitutes a conceptual template for ordering and anticipating experience.

While some of the person's constructs may be shared by others (Commonality Corollary, Kelly, 1955, pp. 90-94), other constructs will be unique (Individuality Corollary, Kelly, 1955, pp. 55-56). As a result no two persons will have wholly identical personal construct systems nor will they share identical world views. This highlights construct theory's position on constructive alternativism (Kelly, 1955, pp. 3-45): that any single experience or event is open to a variety of different interpretations. These interpretations are a function of the available constructs which form the individual's construct system. The instrument described here is designed to help articulate that unique world view.

Cultural Attitudes Repertory Technique

Deriving from Kelly's (1955) Role Construct Repertory Test, the Cultural Attitudes Repertory Technique (CART) examines the content and structure of the individual's personal system of cultural constructs. As with other forms of the reptest (c.f. Fransella & Bannister, 1977; Neimeyer & Neimeyer, 1981, for reviews) the CART consists of a grid matrix and a series of elements (see Figure 1 for a completed CART) from which the constructs are derived. A series of constructs is elicited by comparing three of the twelve elements at a time regarding

the ways they are alike and different. In this case the elements are 12 different cultural groups (e.g., Black males, Latin females, White females, Native-American males, etc.). For example, in Row 1 circles appear under columns 3 (White female), 5 (Asian American female), and 7 (International female). The individual is then asked to think of some way in which any 2 of these 3 elements are like one another. The answer is written in the "Way Alike" column to the right of the grid matrix. Its opposite is recorded in the adjacent "Way Different" column. This procedure is then repeated for each of the remaining rows until 12 different constructs have been elicited.

Following this elicitation phase, subjects are instructed to transfer their constructs onto a separate rating sheet. The format of the rating sheet requires them to place the ends of each construct on the opposite sides of a 7-point Likert-type continuum (e.g., "family oriented" 3 2 1 0 1 2 3 "independent"). Using a series of such scales, individuals are then asked to rate each of the 12 cultural groups along each personal construct and to value code each side of every construct according to which side seems most positive (+) and which seems most negative (-). This results in a matrix of 144 ratings (12 constructs by 12 elements). These ratings are assumed to represent a sample of the individual's perceptions of various cultural groups from within the perspective of his or her unique world view.

Case Example

For purposes of illustration, the CART was administered twice to a 27 year old white female graduate student in counselor education. The first administration occurred during the opening week of an introductory course in "Counseling Ethnic Minorities." The one-semester (45 total hours) course was designed to raise issues regarding the unique values of a variety of non-majority populations within the United States (American and international) as they impact on counseling. The CART was readministered during the final week of the class using the subject's original constructs.

Analyses

The data are amenable to a variety of analyses. An inspection of the content of the constructs is often very informative. For example, Figure 1 depicts the constructs elicited from the sample subject. Reflected in the constructs is an appreciation of a diversity of cultural values which might impact on counseling. The articulation of political (women's roles viewed traditionally vs. changing), intrapsychic (less emotional vs. more emotional), and systemic (less family oriented vs. more family oriented) factors indicate the availability of a fairly broad range of cultural constructs.

In addition to the content of the construct system, however, considerations of its structural properties might also be useful. Perhaps the most widely studied stuctural characteristic is the "cognitive complexity" of the construct system. According to Tripodi and Bieri (1964, p. 122), "Cognitive complexity refers to the degree of differentiation in an individual's construct system, i.e. the relative number of different dimensions of judgment used by a person." Operationally, complexity is defined as the number of non-identical ratings of a set of stimulus persons (cultures) along a set of bipolar construct scales. The smaller the number of identical ratings between all possible pairs of constructs, the more cognitively complex, or differentiated the person is

judged to be (Bieri, Atkins, Briar, Leaman, Miller & Tripodi, 1966).

The relevance of cognitive differentiation to counseling (c.f. Landfield, 1971) and social sensitivity (c.f. O'Keefe & Sypher, 1981) derives from the premise that the more differentiated an individual's construct system is, "the more readily he [sic] may grasp the diverse points of view of the persons whom he encounters by virtue of his having potentially available within the context of his system a greater number of alternative lines of inference . ." (Adams-Webber, 1979, p. 45). Conceptual complexity may be especially important in cross-cultural counseling where the ability to move beyond an ethnocentric, to a more pluralistic perspective may be related to therapeutic effectiveness (Sue, et. al, 1982). Cognitive differentiation is one form of conceptual complexity.

But, as O'Keefe and Sypher (1981) note, a construct system could be considered "complex" on bases other than the degree of differentiation between its constructs. Following Werner (1957), one could argue that as construct systems become more complex they display not only greater degrees of cognitive differentiation, but also increasing hierarchical integration of the constructs they comprise. Integration refers to the extent to which the personal constructs are arranged into an interrelated system of constructions. In the absence of these more integrative constructions, a high degree of differentiation might more accurately reflect cognitive fragmentation and disorganization, than sophistication (Landfield, 1977). One implication of this reasoning is that cross-cultural awareness might

be reflected in both greater differentiation and integration of the relevant construct system.

Some evidence bearing on this hypothesis can be gained by comparing the scores of the individual used in this paper before and after her participation in the course on Counseling Ethnic Minorities. This comparison is not intended as a definitive test of the hypothesis but rather is an illustration of one type of analysis which may be informative.

Results and Discussion

Ratings performed on the respondent's constructs were analyzed by the ELTORP II computer program developed by Landfield, Page and Lavelle (see Note 1), yielding scores for Functionally Independent Construction (FIC) and Ordination (Ord) at both testings. The FIC score indexes the degree of differentiation in the respondent's system by comparing the ratings of the 12 cultural groups on each construct with those performed on every other construct. Construct pairs which were used to categorize the 12 cultural groups similarly 10 or more times (83.3%) were considered functionally dependent (see Landfield, 1971, 1977). The greater the FIC score, the greater the degree of differentiation the individual's construct system was assumed to possess.

Differentiation can occur at two levels: cultural groups and constructs. If all cultures are viewed as functionally equivalent (i.e., rated similarly more than 83.3% of the time), then only one cluster will emerge. In contrast, if each of the 12 cultures is appreciated for its uniqueness then 12 functionally independent clusters will emerge. Therefore differentiation of the cultural groups reflects how clearly the individual distinguishes among the 12 cultures, collapsed across constructs (possible range = 1 to 12). Differentiation among constructs reflects how differently the 12 constructs are used, collapsed across cultures (possible range = 1 to 12). The total differentiation score is a combination of these two scores (possible range = 2 to 24).

The Ordination score assesses the flexibility with which the respondent employs particular construct scales to rate the 12 cultural groups, it being assumed that greater flexibility reflects greater degrees of hierarchical integration of the construct system (see Landfield (1977) for rationale and scoring procedure). Thus, the higher the Ord score, the more cognitively integrated the respondent was taken to be.

As with differentiation, integration can occur at two levels. Integration of the cultural groups indicates the degree of flexibility with which the groups are viewed across constructs (possible range = 1 to 6). Integration of the constructs reflects the degree of flexibility with which the constructs are used across cultural groups (possible range = 1 to 6). The total integration score is the combination of these two scores (possible range = 2 to 12).

Results of these analyses for the sample respondent indicated appreciable changes over time in the amount of differentiation, but not integration of the cultural construct system. On pre-test, she differentiated between four clusters of cultural groups. The international (Iranian) male was viewed as functionally independent of all other groups, as was the Latin male. The third cluster, however, consisted of the Native American male, International female, White male, White female, Black female, Latin female, Asian American male, and Asian American female. These eight cultural groups were viewed as functionally equivalent (i.e., rated similarly at least 83% of the time). The final cluster consisted of the Black male and the Native American female.

The constructs themselves also showed very little differentiation at pre-test. Only two clusters of constructs emerged. All constructs were functionally equivalent with the exception of "uses alcohol vs. abuses alcohol." The total pre-test differentiation, then, was 6 (4 culture clusters + 2 construct clusters = 6).

At pre-test, the ordination score for the cultural groups was 2.00, and for the constructs, 2.33. The total ordination score of 4.33 may reflect moderately low levels of integration in the pre-test cultural construct system of this counseling student.

Following the semester's training in cross-cultural issues the CART was readministered using the individual's original constructs. While the degree of integration of the cultural groups remained unchanged (2.00), the integration of the constructs showed a slight decrement (1.50). In contrast, the overall degree of differentiation increased markedly, from 6 to 13. Following the course the individual differentiated among 9 clusters of cultures (International male; Native American male; International female; Latin female, Latin male; Native American female; Black female; Asian American male and female; White male; White female; Black male). This increased differentiation of cultural groups may reflect a keener appreciation of cultural and racial differences.

The constructs themselves were also used in a more differentiated fashion following the course. Four construct clusters emerged as functionally independent (repressed vs. free; comfortable with same sex vs. competitive; family oriented vs. less family oriented; and, all other constructs). This increased differentiation among the constructs may indicate that the same constructs became more useful in differentiating among the various cultural groups after completing the course in Counseling Ethnic Minorities.

One interpretation of this person's overall changes can be characterized as follows: Prior to any cross-cultural training or

experience, the individual had a rather undifferentiated and poorly integrated system of cultural understandings. She was effectively "colorblind" in the sense that her constructs were not particularly useful in helping her to discern differences among the various cultural groups. Following training she had an increased awareness of cultural differences. This was reflected in her ability to differentiate better the various cultural groups along her personal constructs.

Despite the increased compexity of her cultural awareness, her system remained poorly integrated. This is not surprising since differentiation often precedes integration (Werner, 1957). As she gains experience in cross-cultural contexts, one might expect her to use the system in a more flexible and integrated fashion.

Although the data conform to such an interpretation the illustrative nature of the analysis should again be noted. The lack of appropriate controls, the absence of statistical analyses, and the single case nature of the design all prevent any definitive empirical statement. In this case the data has served heuristic, not scientific, purposes.

Summary

The Cultural Attitudes Repertory Technique (CART) is a flexible tool which can be useful in examining certain facets of cultural world views. At the simplest level, the CART can be used as a self-exploration exercise. It can be helpful in assisting counselors to articulate those private dimensions of judgment which may otherwise remain implicit in their cross-cultural interventions. Experience indicates that individuals find the exercise both challenging and rewarding. It piques interest in examining cross-cultural issues and stimulates discussion concerning unique, as well as shared, cultural constructions. It can be adapted for use in a variety of settings ranging from workshops to supervision.

Concerning the issue of counselor training, the CART might be useful in monitoring changes in constructions over the course of cross-cultural experience. As an example one might expect increases in cognitive complexity (differentiation and integration) with continued cultural experience.

The use of Slater's (1964) INGRID program provides a principle components analysis of the data which could graphically illustrate the shifting cultural attitudes over time. By plotting the constructs and cultures within the same "psychological space," this analysis provides a representation of the individual's cultural world view. Clusters of cultures which are viewed similarly are then easily discerned, as are those other groups which are more distant, isolated, or polarized. Discussions of the analysis with a supervisor can serve as an efficient and effective means of exploring a variety of cultural issues from within the world view of the supervisee.

Related research could examine characteristics of counselors in each of the four quadrants defined by high and low integration and differentiation (Landfield, 1977). Perhaps the "colorblind" counselor is characterized by a system of constructs which is poorly differentiated. In contrast, the counselor who is beginning to expand cultural awareness may be flooded with an appreciation of cultural variations (high differentiation), but as yet lacks the ability to relate those together into a systematic whole (low integration). With experience the system of understandings might become more integrated and intelligible. Perhaps the most effective cross-cultural counselor is characterized by high levels of both differentiation and integration such that a wide variety of cultural variations are appreciated within a flexible system of understandings.

Additional information useful in training and supervision could be gained from the CART by using analyses not illustrated in this case example.

Such alternatives vary greatly in design and complexity. At a simple descriptive level it is interesting to consider the value codings of constructs. Individuals vary widely in the manner in which they value such dimensions as "assertive vs. deferring," "intellectual vs. emotional," and "family-oriented vs. independent." Further, tallying the number of times each cultural group is viewed on the positive side of the constructs yields a positivity score (Neimeyer & Neimeyer, 1981a) for each culture. Information concerning those groups which are viewed most and least positively can provide useful data for counselor supervision and training.

In addition to a visual inspection, constructs can be classified according to predetermined categories of interest. Duck's (1973) post-coding system categorizes constructs according to physical (e.g., light skin vs. dark skin), interactional (e.g., macho vs. deferring), role (e.g., male-dominated vs. egalitarian), and psychological (e.g., sensitive vs. insensitive) categories. Landfield's (1971) extensive construct coding manual enables more refined post-coding along 22 rating categories and provides examples of over one thousand previously post-coded dimensions.

Beyond this, the CART may be useful in identifying the specific components of particular cultural world views. Kelly (1955, p. 94) has noted, "People belong to the same cultural group, not merely because they behave alike, nor because they expect the same things of others, but especially because they construe their experience in the same way." In support of this reasoning Triandis, et. al (1972) observed that different cultural groups have available different constructs for interpreting experience. For example, White Americans have hundreds of concepts for understanding automobiles; the desert-dwelling Bedouins have hundreds of

concepts for construing camels. Similarly, within the United States tentative evidence has indicated that majority and minority populations differ with respect to the way in which they construe emotional experience (Leff, 1973). This suggests that greater commonality of construct systems might be expected to occur within a particular cultural group than between groups (Diamond, 1982). For instance, because Anglos have a tendency to overlook systemic factors (Schwebel, 1980), they might display fewer systemic constructs (e.g., those having to do with environmental or political experience) than non-Anglo populations. The unique world views of a variety of cultures could be specified by identifying those dimensions which differentiate the various groups. Careful and systematic study in this area could contribute to empirical refinement of more intuitively derived schemas for assessing the world views of different cultural groups (e.g., Sue & Sue, 1977).

Lastly, beyond its individualistic applications, the CART may be useful in dyadic analyses of cross-cultural counseling. For example, comparisons could be made between counselors' and clients' constructions. Perhaps, as Triandis, et. al (1972) have suggested, two persons interact more effectively if they overlap substantially in their "subjective cultures" so that they make similar differentiations. Greater similarity in the content and structure of cultural constructs might facilitate effective communication (Duck, 1977), and therefore contribute to more successful treatment. Tentative evidence supports this conjecture by indicating that similarity in the content of their constructs is positively related to the effectiveness of the counselor/client dyad (Landfield, 1971).

In summary, this paper has reported on the method and possible applications of a technique for examining cultural attitudes. The development of the Cultural Attitudes Repertory Technique (CART) is in the exploratory stage and

its usefulness in empirical research remains to be established. The instrument is designed to elicit individuals' unique understandings of cultural elements, and to assess the content and structure of those understandings. As with other forms of the Repgrid (c.f. Fransella & Bannister, 1977; Neimeyer & Neimeyer, 1981), the CART is a technique which may be adapted to a variety of professional and empirical concerns.

Reference Note

1. Copies of this Fortran program are available from Dr. A. W. Landfield, Department of Psychology, 209 Burnett Hall, University of Nebraska, Lincoln, Nebraska, 68588.

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Figure 1: Cultural Attitudes Repertory Test (CART)

	Black Male 1	Latin Female 2	White Female 3	Native-American Male 4	Asian-American Female 5	International Male 6	International Female 7	Black Female 8	Latin Male 9	White Male 10	Native-American Female 11	Asian-American Male 12	WAY ALIKE	WAY DIFFERENT
1			●		●		●						financially dependent	independent
2	●			●					●				uses alcohol more	uses alcohol less
3						●		●				●	success oriented	family oriented
4		●								●	●		lacks confidence	self-confident
5	●		●				●						more family oriented	less family oriented
6								●	●			●	high achievers	less achievement oriented
7				●	●					●			comfortable in America	feels displaced
8		●				●					●		traditional women's roles	women's roles are changing
9									●	●		●	less emotional	more emotional
10							●	●			●		comfortable with same sex	competitive with same sex
11		●		●		●							more repressed	free to choose
12	●		●		●								USA: land of opportunity	feels oppressed here